



Committee on  
**HOMELAND SECURITY**  
Chairman Michael McCaul

**Opening Statement**

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**Statement of Chairman Michael McCaul (R-Texas)**  
**Committee on Homeland Security**

**“Open Borders: The Impact of Presidential Amnesty on Border Security”**

**Remarks as Delivered**

Today, we’re here to talk about illegal immigration and the grave consequences of the administration’s recent actions to bypass Congress. Immigration reform is an emotional and divisive issue; there is no doubt about that. But the president’s unilateral actions to bypass Congress undermine the constitution and threaten our democracy.

Let me be clear: our immigration system is broken, and we need to fix it. America has always stood proudly as a beacon of hope for millions who are seeking a better life. And we should work hard to keep it that way. But regardless of where you stand on this issue, there is a right way to do this, and there is a wrong way. And unfortunately the president has taken the wrong way.

In addition, the president has risked breaking something much more fundamental: our democratic process. We are a nation of laws. Yet this unprecedented executive power grab undermines the principle that the people—not just one man—should be the ultimate decision makers on our country’s most important political matters. This action has also “poisoned the well” here in Washington at a time when Americans desperately want their government to work together.

We are facing crucial challenges that require Congress and the White House to cooperate, from combating overseas threats to driving economic growth. But by making an end-run around Congress, the president has deliberately and willfully broken the trust that is needed between our branches of government. The President knows the damage of these actions. He has said over 20 times in his presidency that he did not have the authority to take executive action on immigration, and that this is “not how democracy works.” He also said doing so would, “lead to a surge in more illegal immigration.” He was right. It will.

History has proven that amnesty perpetuates a cycle of illegal entry into this country. This was true in the 1980s and has proven true under this administration’s abuse of “prosecutorial discretion”—a power to decide when to prosecute lawbreakers and when not to, a power which should be used narrowly and carefully. This

administration has done the opposite. They've taken a sweeping approach to prosecutorial discretion that makes a mockery of the law.

The consequences are very real. This summer, the administration's refusal to enforce our immigration laws enticed at least 60,000 unaccompanied children to make the perilous journey to our borders. Many travelled to the United States under misinformation regarding the administration granting of "permiso's." We can expect many, many more to do the same because of the president's recent actions.

The lax interior enforcement policies adopted by this administration coupled with even the perception of amnesty become a powerful magnet that encourages more illegal immigration. We essentially tell citizens of other countries if you come here, you can stay – don't worry, we won't deport you. The reality on the ground is that unless you commit multiple crimes, the chances of your being removed from this country are close to zero. This year the U.S. Border Patrol apprehended 479,000 individuals along the Southern Border but less than half were deported. Those who remained were given notices to appear before an immigration judge, with a court date years away, and released into the country. We know that the majority will never check back in with authorities.

If we don't think that message is making its way back to Mexico and Central America, we are simply fooling ourselves. We will see a wave of illegal immigration because of the president's actions. At its core, the president's unilateral amnesty plan is deeply unfair to the millions who are waiting in line to become a part of our great nation, and it demonstrates reckless disregard for America's security. We have a formal immigration process for a reason: to promote fairness in allowing people to enter the United States and to keep those who will seek to do us harm outside of our borders.

Sadly, the Department of Homeland Security is unprepared to handle the coming surge that the president's policies will incite. The Border Patrol's resources are already strained as immigrants pour across the border, making it difficult to identify smugglers, criminals, and potential terrorists.

We need to reform our immigration laws, but we need to do it the right way. And that means starting the process in the lawmaking branch of our government. Congress will address immigration reform. But we need to do so in an intelligent way, and in keeping with the wishes of the American people. The majority of American's do not agree with the president's executive actions. They want Congress to find a solution--one that begins with securing our borders.

I look forward to hearing from the Secretary, and I hope he will address the serious concerns Congress and the American people have about the president's decision.

We cannot turn a blind eye to the real threats which these actions will bring to our country's doorstep.

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